

Weekly Column for March 15, 2007

For the second consecutive week we spent a fair amount of time this week discussing possible economic opportunities along the Hudson River. Last week the big talk centered around the demolition of City Hall and construction of new office or hotel space in its footprint. An exciting project to say the least. This week plans surfaced for a section of riverfront north of City Hall along River Street.

For those that have not heard anything about this project as of yet you can visit www.hedleyparkplace.com

The developer involved in this project is First Columbia out of Latham, which first purchased buildings formerly owned by John Hedley last year. For the better part of a year we have been meeting with Kevin Bette from First Columbia to discuss this project. As you will see from the website, they envision this as a project that is, "A Vision for a Vibrant Waterfront District in Downtown Troy."

I wholeheartedly agree. This project, or development, or idea, is different than anything we have discussed in Troy for a long time. The reason for that is quite simple. We are not talking about developing a plot of land like City Hall. And we are not talking about an empty 14-acre site like the \$160 million Congress-Ferry Street project.

Instead this is a plan that will completely transform not one, but several neighborhoods in the City of Troy. First Columbia calls it the Hedley District and estimates that the impact years from now will be felt by more than the two-dozen surrounding blocks. This is a reputable developer that would like to spend their own money to build retail shops, commercial offices, a hotel, and riverfront amenities that will change the way of life for those in North Central, Columbus Square, and Downtown. Just thinking about it makes me smile.

For the better part of three years, I have talked about creating an environment for growth. Cleaning the streets and improving public safety leads to a better quality of life. When you combine that with the unique past and architectural infrastructures here in Troy, we are living in an era where the time is ripe for development. We are at a point here in Troy where we can increase our tax base, living options, and overall aesthetic value, and I am proud to be a part of the wonderful change.

If you have any questions on these topics, please do not hesitate to call my office or shoot us an email at mayorsoffice@troyny.gov

One final thing this week, it appears another storm is on its way. Please park in driveways, use City facilities and keep your cars off of the street when possible. It will only help is in cleaning everything up.

Have a great weekend and Happy Saint Patrick's Day.